

Social-Sexual Understanding for People with Developmental Disabilities

The following are strategies and resources for interventions and supports to people with developmental disabilities regarding education, abuse and tools for learning.

1. Professionals need to receive training regarding social-sexual understanding, myths regarding disabilities and abuse and where to access materials to assist in teaching.
 - Myth #1 People with disabilities cannot understand relationships
 - Myth #2 People with disabilities cannot have Real relationships
 - Myth #3 People with disabilities should respect authority
 - Myth #4 People with disabilities are defenseless and powerless
2. Professionals need to familiarize themselves with “Violence and abuse in the lives of people with developmental disabilities” by Sobsey’s research and “I witness” History and a person with developmental disabilities.”, 1991, Hindsburger. Shakeshaft, Special Education Muckracker report, 2004. All Information can be located on internet.
3. Professionals need to understand that the language they use need to be simplified but not child-like. Professionals need to give choices to the client and give them time to process information. Professionals need to slow down information and teach only 1-2 concepts at a time. Professionals need to use more visuals and less talk therapy. Professionals need to understand that clients are use to hiding their disability and are good at mimicking what you say but they do not understand what they are saying back to you. It is better to ask them to demonstrate or “show me” instead of asking them to repeat what you have said.
4. Explore services in your area and professionals that work with clients with developmental disabilities and have expertise with sexuality and abuse. Checking with your local regional center in your area are places to start.